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AUTHOR Cooper, Jack H.
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ABSTRACT

Data were collected on the patterns of services provided by units of Higher Education in universities to community and junior colleges in the West, Midwest, East, and South during the years 1970 and 1971. The data were obtained by questionnaire returned by 36 of 61 universities to which it was sent. Results of the survey are presented by region, by type of control (public or private), and by whether the units were old established departments or newly created. The study data strongly support the contention that the university units of Higher Education continue to serve an important role in providing leadership services to community colleges. (DB)

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Field Services Provided to Community Colleges by University Departments of Higher Education

by Jack H. Cooper

From their inception junior and community colleges have looked to certain universities for advocacy of the movement and leadership in their development as post-secondary educational institutions. Indeed, the influence of such prestigious universities as Chicago, Stanford, California and Minnesota was probably indispensable in acquiring the necessary ideological rationale, the enabling legislation, and funding of the public two-year college. The momentum generated by the universities carried the movement through the first two decades, gaining sufficient public support and training professional leadership so that by 1920 the American Association of Junior Colleges had need to come into existence to cope with the collective concerns of such colleges.

In the recent period of greatest expansion of the community college (1946-70) the university continued to provide leadership but directed a considerable part of its effort to establish mechanisms within the state education bureaucracies and professional associations for services to the individual colleges. A substantial number of universities developed pre-service professional staff preparation programs, often with federal or foundation grants. A few universities concentrated on researching the community colleges, building an impressive bank of empirical data on the clients and operations of the colleges. But the colleges increasingly began to find that the personal, informal, friend-of-the-college style of service from the university was becoming hard to get.

With the number of community and junior colleges approximating one thousand and with better than sixty developed departments, centers, or

other units of Higher Education in universities throughout the country I decided to examine the patterns of services which these university units were offering directly to community and junior colleges. A questionnaire was developed, field tested and revised, and sent to Higher Education chairpersons or professors in 61 universities. Usable returns were received from 36 institutions for a 60 per cent response. Data are for the years 1970 and 1971. Comparisons were drawn for universities:

1. by region: West, Midwest, East, South
2. by type of control: public or private
3. by entrenchment of the Higher Education component: old, established unit versus newly created unit--but in any case a recognized unit of Higher Education.

Nationwide trends seemed to be as follows:

1. The services of the University are made available particularly to in-state community colleges to the extent of time and funds available, primarily at the request of the community college.

2. Faculty members were generally free to consult during working hours "to a reasonable amount of time." However, there was some mention of this being limited by written or unwritten policy to anywhere from one day per week to only on the consultant's own time. The trend seems to be toward a policy that will establish these limits.

3. Although the great majority of respondents indicated their services were of an ad hoc nature, they reported an increasing emphasis on what had been termed in the questionnaire "Long Term Services."

4. The major effort of the universities has been in the area of

in-service training and consultation with the staff and faculty of community colleges. Not much service is being offered to college boards of trustees. Primarily, the effort has been to deans of instruction, student service deans and presidents. A fairly representative number of universities also indicated help given in the form of research.

5. Future trends are interesting: both expansion and curtailment are indicated and based on explanatory comments of respondents. This up or down movement is tied directly to availability of funds.

6. The questionnaire did not produce a definitive answer to the question of the costs of consulting. Generally, services offered to community colleges were offered without charge--particulary in-state colleges. In addition, such services were generally considered to be part of the faculty member's load. However, it was also generally reported that faculty members were free to consult during working hours, within reason, and were also free to negotiate their own fees. Some universities indicated a policy in regard to the amount of time spent on outside consulting, some indicated a university policy in regard to the amount to be charged for consulting. However, the difference between services offered free of charge to the community colleges and considered a part of staff load and the services offered on a consultative basis with a fee charged and negotiated by the individual faculty member performing the service was not made clear. Apparently the matter of fees was left to the discretion of the university consultant and the community college in the majority of cases.

Consideration by regions leads to some trends as follows:

1. In the Western States, advice is sought in the selection of a new

president, in preparing for accreditation and in faculty orientation and development. In addition to "preparatory advice," in-service assistance is generally made available to the administration, faculty and student personnel staffs on a consultative basis.

Although field courses were offered by some of the universities, this is not generally a part of the services available. Internships were rarely reported.

2. The Midwest, on the other hand, had several respondents that indicated an intern program in teaching and/or administration. There was also mention made of the university's involvement in consortia planning. There is probably a greater range in the number and variety of two-year post-secondary schools in the Midwest than in other regions and also in the relationship of the university to these colleges. As an overall view, community colleges in states with a community college system seemed to have a closer working relationship with the university and the university, which in turn seemed to have a more long range concern for the colleges.

3. Respondents from the Eastern states generally indicated a lesser degree of involvement with community college consultation than respondents from the other regions. The reason might be that the community college program is newer generally in that area than in other parts of the country. The university respondents described, in general, their services as being one of preparation of future faculty and administrators to work at the community college level.

4. From the South, Florida indicated a high degree of consultative services to the community colleges from, not only the universities, but from the professional personnel employed by the state coordinating body.

Aside from that, the other respondents indicated generally non-policy based ad hoc consultative services given in answer to a request.

Courses offered on the site of community colleges ranged from the broad philosophical approach of "The Community Junior College," "The College Student and the College Culture," "College Teachers and College Teaching," "Higher Education in Selected Nations," "The Two Year College Student," to specific professional training as indicated in titles as "Curriculum Development," "Vocational and Technical Education," "Finance," "Student Personnel Services," and "Self Instructional Materials."

The general feeling throughout the country was one of willingness to serve as consultant to the community college program, but with a lack of legislative approval or encouragement to do so. This, coupled with a lack of policy within which to operate has limited the university's function to that of ad hoc consultant.

Comparing the services offered to community colleges, together with the conditions of service, of public and private universities produced surprisingly few differences which can be generalized between the two types of institutions. State lines seem to have less influence on the services offered by private institutions, but in many cases these universities seem more public service-oriented to their immediate communities than do the state universities. In particular the non-land grant state universities seem to take this type of public service less seriously than many private universities, with the land grant university perceiving service as most centrally a part of its mission.

An analysis of the results on the basis of old established departments versus newly created departments proved more interesting. The results were predictable: although often there was still no indication of policy at the department level to cover the relationship of the department with various community colleges, there was evidence of more long range planning of services. Fifteen of the institutions were considered to have old established departments. They represented all of the four regions. A majority of them indicated assistance given to state authorities on the establishment of a new college, both within their state and out-of-state. A majority also indicated help offered to community colleges within their state to boards of trustees on selection of a new president, to a new college president, pre-accreditation and in orientation to faculty. This last service was also mentioned often in the description of "other services." Emphasis was placed on instructional improvement, curriculum development, and placement of teaching and administrative interns.

The old established departments offered more long term services with the emphasis definitely on service to community colleges located within their state. The majority worked with the established state agency, with individual college administrations, student personnel service staffs and with the deans of instruction. A lesser degree of communication was indicated between the departments and individual boards of trustees and physical and financial planning was not stressed. It would be interesting to pursue this point--is this due to a lack of interest on the part of the department or the community college? Research, both in the areas of curriculum and administrative organization recognized as services offered by the departments.

Ten of the 15 departments offered courses on the site of one or more of the community colleges. These ranged in subject matter from basic philosophical courses with titles such as "The Junior College," "Community College Course," "The Community Junior College," etc. to the more specific courses concerned with techniques of teaching community junior college students. In almost 100 per cent of the cases, graduate credit is offered for completion of these courses and, only very few of the departments offer undergraduate credit for such course work.

Other services offered commonly were in-service training programs, internships, both teaching and administrative, workshops and short conferences and consultation. Some unique services seemed to be of assistance in developing consortia to meet common needs, newsletters, community service development and the provision of printed materials.

The departments were fairly well divided on whether these consulting services are a part of the faculty member's regular load or whether they are separately recompensed. They were, however, generally in agreement that consulting is done during the regular work day and is not confined to faculty members' free time, although there were unwritten policies mentioned indicating a reasonable amount of time spent.

The majority of the departments charged both in-state and out-of-state colleges for the field services made available to them. Consulting fees charged by individual faculty members were, in general, negotiated by the individual. However, in one instance, such fees were arranged by the Office of Field Service, and in one other, any fees charged must have prior approval of the University.

Future plans included expansion of services, provided legislative

support is available, creation of Higher Education Research Centers, centralization of services and, in general, an interest on the part of the department crippled by lack of funds and not covered by policy nor showing much direction.

Conclusion

The data from this study strongly supports the contention that university units of Higher Education continue to serve an important role in providing leadership services to community colleges. As the community college system of a region approaches maturity specific types of services will be less in demand as the colleges are able to become more self-servicing. However, new demands are being made on community colleges as the nation laboriously weaves the fabric of a new public philosophy of post-secondary education. University specialists in Higher Education are the weathervanes of such changes emerging on the horizon and must continuously retool themselves to service community colleges and their changing needs.

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